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SUBJECT: AU Summit - A/S Carson's Meeting with Burkina Faso
President Campaore

This message is from USAU Ambassador Michael A. Battle.

11. (SBU) January 31, 2010; 20:00; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY. A/S Carson thanked Burkinabe President Blaise Campaore for his leadership in returning Guinea to civilian rule. President Campaore was appreciative and echoed the need for continued work and partnership to implement a peaceful, democratic transition in Guinea-Conakry. He stated that he had assigned a senior Burkinabe military official to help guide the Guinean military reorganization process. President Campaore was also amenable to the idea of an observer force lead by ECOWAS or other regional actors to reassure civilians and act as a watchdog during the transition to democratic rule. Both parties expressed intentions to work together towards implementation of the Ouagadougou Accord. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) A/S Carson extended greetings from President Obama and Secretary Clinton, thanking President Campaore for his help on Guinea. He expressed the gratitude of the USG for Burkina Faso's actions to help put Guinea-Conakry back on the path of democratic, civilian rule. A/S Carson reiterated the USG's belief that Captain Moussa Dadis Camara's presence in Guinea would be a disruptive force in the democratic transition process. He also expressed the willingness of the USG to help Burkina Faso implement the Ouagadougou Accord and foster a peaceful, democratic transition - notably through assistance in restructuring the Guinean military. A/S Carson urged President Campaore to continue guiding the process, noting the regional importance of a democratic transition in Guinea.

14. (SBU) President Campaore echoed the thanks of A/S Carson, acknowledging that progress on the Guinea issue is due to a team effort. Campaore noted Guinea has taken the essential steps toward a democratic transition, but that the situation remains fragile. He agreed with A/S Carson's concerns about the return of Camara and the challenge of restructuring the Army. President Campaore said he assigned a senior Burkinabe military official to help guide the Guinean military reorganization process. He expressed concern at the lack of a civilian political class and deep divisions within in the Guinean Army. Campaore underscored the challenges of getting cooperation amongst the disparate political forces. He highlighted the need to remain vigilant and guide Guinea through this difficult transition.

15. (SBU) A/S Carson applauded the "appropriate and correct" action of Burkina Faso. He agreed with the need to reassure the Guinean military. Carson also affirmed that the USG would continue to encourage all parties to respect the electoral process, giving Guinea a chance to transform itself into a strong, democratic society. Carson reiterated USG commitment to helping reform the Guinean military and supported Burkina Faso's intent to send a high-level official to deal with this challenge. Carson also floated the idea of an ECOWAS or other regional observer force, consisting of 30-40 civilian and military officials. This force would be an augmented diplomatic corps rather than a peacekeeping force, working to reassure civilians and act as a watchdog against any potential military excesses. A/S Carson closed by urging Campaore to remain focused on Guinea and reaffirming the appreciation and thanks of the USG for Burkina Faso's work in moving Guinea along a democratic path.

16. (SBU) President Campaore responded to the observer force comment by noting the provisions of the Ouagadougou Accord for military-civilian observers. He vowed to foster implementation of the Ouagadougou Accord. In closing, President Campaore expressed a desire to keep in touch with the United States on this issue.

17. (U) A/S Carson has approved this message.

YATES